WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1-15 (Canceled)

16. (New) A medium- or large-diameter single-cylinder circular knitting machine, comprising a needle cylinder that has a vertical axis and a sinker ring that is connected coaxially to said needle cylinder proximate to the upper end of the needle cylinder, said sinker ring having a plurality of radial slots, each of which accommodates at least one sinker, wherein said sinker ring is arranged inside the radial dimensions of said needle cylinder, said sinkers having a beak that is directed toward the axis of the needle cylinder.

17. (New) The machine according to claim 16, wherein each one of said sinkers has, along its extension, at least one actuation heel that protrudes upwardly from the corresponding radial slot and is engageable with sinker actuation cams that are connected to a sinker cap facing in an upward region said sinker ring, said needle cylinder and said sinker ring being actuatable, jointly, with a rotary motion about their own axis with respect to said sinker cap.

18. (New) The machine according to claim 17, wherein said sinker actuation cams have a shape adapted to produce a movement of the sinkers toward and away from the axis of the sinker ring as a consequence of the rotation of said sinker ring with respect to said actuation cams.

19. (New) The machine according to claim 17, wherein said sinker cap is fixed to a goblet-like element, which is arranged internally and coaxially to said needle cylinder.

20. (New) The machine according to claim 19, wherein said sinker cap is provided as a peripheral rim of said goblet-like element, with an upper face that is shaped like a conical surface that widens upwardly.

21. (New) The machine according to claim 16, wherein said radial slots have a bottom on which the corresponding sinker rests, said bottom being arranged on a plane that is substantially perpendicular to the axis of the

sinker ring.

22. (New) The machine according to claim 21, wherein said bottom of the radial slots of the sinker ring is recessed with respect to the upper end of the needle cylinder.

23. (New) The machine according to claim 22, wherein a radial slot is formed in the upper end of the needle cylinder, between two contiguous axial slots that accommodate respective needles, is aligned with a corresponding radial slot of the sinker ring, and slidingly accommodates a portion of a corresponding sinker.

24. (New) The machine according to claim 23, wherein the bottom of the radial slots formed in the needle cylinder is arranged at a higher level than the bottom of the radial slots of the sinker ring, the lower side of said sinkers being step-shaped, with two sinker resting surfaces, respectively a lower resting surface, which engages the bottom of the radial slot formed in said sinker ring, and an upper resting surface, which engages the bottom of the radial slot formed in the upper end of the needle cylinder.

25. (New) The machine according to claim 24, wherein said sinker has a first portion that is delimited in a downward region by said lower resting surface and is provided in an upward region with said actuation heel, and a second portion that is delimited in a downward region by said upper resting surface and is provided in an upward region with said beak, a shoulder being provided on said first portion, being arranged opposite said heel, and being engageable with said sinker actuation cams.

26. (New) The machine according to claim 25, wherein said sinker actuation cams comprise an annular cam, which is arranged coaxially to said sinker ring and has a profile with portions in which at least one part protrudes toward, and at least one part retracts from, the axis of the sinker ring, said annular cam engaging said sinkers between said sinker heel and said shoulder.

27. (New) A sinker for a medium- or large-diameter circular knitting

machine, comprising a laminar body provided with a beak proximate to a first one of its ends, wherein said beak is directed toward the second, opposite end of the laminar body.

28. (New) The sinker according to claim 27, wherein said laminar body has an upper side provided with a sinker actuation heel, said beak protruding on said upper side and being directed toward said actuation heel.

29. (New) The sinker according to claim 28, wherein the lower side of said laminar body that lies opposite with respect to the upper side provided with said actuation heel has a step-like profile, with two sinker resting surfaces that are substantially flat and parallel to each other, respectively a lower resting surface and an upper resting surface that is spaced upwardly from said lower resting surface.

30. (New) The sinker according to claim 29, wherein said laminar body has a first portion, which is delimited in a downward region by said lower resting surface and is provided in an upward region with said heel, and a second portion, which is delimited in a downward region by said upper resting surface and is provided with said beak, a shoulder being provided on said first portion and being arranged opposite said actuation heel.